

## **INTRODUCTION**

The South Gallatin Zoning District (SGZD) was formed by citizen petition on May 29, 1975. Residents who circulated the petition stated that its purpose was:

"To preserve, protect, and enhance the South Gallatin Zoning District's environmental, scenic and natural resources and amenities, its economy and way-of-life, and to prevent the District from becoming a victim of its own beauty and uniqueness."

The process of producing a development plan was well under way when it ground to a halt in the summer of 1977. Up to that point, a citizen's committee held meetings concerning the direction of future growth in the district, compiled environmental base data, and worked on a zoning ordinance.

One of the reasons for the project's loss of momentum was the sale of nearly 4,000 acres of land in the Taylor Fork area to the Nature Conservancy. The land was owned by Jim and Patty Goodrich of the 320 Ranch and they had subdivided and planned to develop one of their sections of land. Some of the local landowners feared the residential development planned would be inconsistent with existing uses in the upper canyon. The Goodrich land was a major impetus for the citizen petitioned zoning district and sale of the land to the Nature Conservancy and subsequent purchase by the Forest Service removed the development concern.

## **LOCATION**

The area within the boundary of the South Gallatin Zoning District is one of majestic beauty. The north boundary of the district is located 50 miles south of Bozeman in the Gallatin Canyon and generally follows the Buck Creek-Yellowmule Creek divide. The county line forms the east and west boundaries. The south boundary follows the rugged divide between the Madison and Gallatin Rivers.

The Gallatin River and Highway 191 split the district with one of the more scenic corridors in Montana. The topography rises massively both east and west of the Gallatin river to elevations that range from 6,300 to 10,000 feet. The feeling of the area is one of scenic splendor characterized by sparkling creeks, lowland sage and grassland, dense mid-elevation forest, and high elevation tundra and rugged peaks. Wildlife is abundant and the Gallatin River is a nationally regarded trout stream.

## HISTORY

Trappers explored the Gallatin Canyon and named its tributaries. More extensive settlement did not occur until the turn of the century. It was then that Walter Cooper, with investment from Butte and Helena, established three major lumber camps on Taylor Fork.

A road was carved up-river from the Gallatin Valley to service the lumber camps, which initiated a several year period of log operations for railroad ties. The camps on Taylor Fork were operated by fifty men each, and there were three or four smaller camps on lesser adjacent creeks. A settlement of 200 was established on Eldridge Creek, complete with a post office to serve the camps. The logs were floated during high water to a processing mill in the Gallatin Valley. Labor difficulties and a decline in the market caused the demise of the lumber operations in 1907.

Dude ranching in the district began at about the same time as the decline of the logging operations. In 1906, the Buffalo Horn Ranch was established. It was renamed the 320 Ranch in 1936, when it was purchased by Caroline McGill, Butte's first woman doctor. Jim and Patty Goodrich bought the Buffalo Horn from Caroline McGill in 1959.

The Butler Family, of the Chicago based Butler Paper Co., built three early dude ranches in the Gallatin Canyon, on the West Fork, Taylor Fork, and Sage Creek. The ranch on Taylor Fork was named the Nine Quarter Circle and was purchased by Howard Kelsey in 1945. The 7-11 Ranch on Sage Creek became part of the present Elkhorn Ranch, which was established by Ernest Miller in 1922. Vic Benson started the Covered Wagon ranch in 1925. Today, guest ranching remains the mainstay of the district's economy.

The Buck Creek drainage became the center of controversy in the late 1970's when Burlington Northern Inc.(BN) sought a special use permit from the Forest Service to construct two roads across public land in the area. The purpose was to gain access to BN timber located on their checkerboard inholdings up Buck Creek and adjacent to the Yellow Mule drainage.

Opponents of the special use permit wanted access denied BN because Buck Creek was part of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Study Area and road building and logging would harm its wilderness potential. After completing an Environmental Impact Statement in 1977, the Forest Service granted the special use permit to BN.

The permit was challenged and became a landmark court decision regarding the Melcher Access Amendment which prevented the federal government from denying access to private land owners. The case was taken to the Ninth District Court of Appeals in San Francisco and was decided against the Forest Service. Timber has been harvested in Buck Creek since 1982.

The controversial public lands issues have continued since the Buck Creek decision. A Lee Metcalf Wilderness was designated in 1983 after many years of debate. Indeed, change continues in the district since it was formed in 1975.

## RESOURCE INFORMATION

The information for this environmental assessment was obtained from numerous sources. The Gallatin Canyon was studied extensively in the early 1970's by Montana State University with a grant from the National Science Foundation. That report did extensive environmental field work concerning the projected impact of the Big Sky ski resort on the area. Information was also obtained from the U.S. Forest Service, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the Gallatin Canyon Study, and other private sources cited throughout the text. Dr. John Montagne was hired by the upper canyon landowners association in 1977 to do physical capabilities field work and that information is included in this report.

### Land Use

The total land area of the SGZD encompasses about 135,000 acres. The following table lists the existing ownership pattern:

	Acres	% of district
Forest Service.....	115,520	85
Big Sky Lumber.....	12,160	9
State of Montana.....	6,080	4
Private.....	2,000	2

#### Public Land

Of the National Forest land, 43,200 acres in the southern part of the district are designated as wilderness or wildlife management units. Both of these designations are intended primarily to preserve the land in a primitive or undeveloped state. The remaining forest land in the district is managed for multiple uses.

However, the Porcupine and Buffalo Horn drainages have been a topic of controversy for over 15 years regarding timber policy and a possible land trade with Plum Creek (now Big Sky Lumber). The recently completed forest plan has no development slated in either drainage for at least ten years. Because most of the land in Buffalo Horn is in public ownership, either Forest Service or Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, this drainage will be managed as undeveloped wildlife habitat. The Forest Service believes that managing their adjacent land for wildlife is complimentary to the state policy. The Forest Service maintains one improved campground in the district at Red Cliff along with 4 major trail heads for Elk Horn, Buffalo Horn, Cinnamon and Sage Creeks.

Big Sky Lumber, Inc.

In the District, most of Big Sky Lumber's land is in checkerboard ownership in Buck Creek and Taylor Fork. Big Sky Lumber also owns one section of land at the head of Buffalo Horn Creek.

#### Individual Private Ownership

Of the remaining 2,000 acres in private ownership, the majority of land is occupied by guest ranches. Guest ranches in the district include the Nine Quarter Circle, the 320, Elkhorn, and Covered Wagon. The Almart area has been subdivided into numerous small holdings with summer homes and cabins built on them. There are a small number of permanent residents in the District.

### TRANSPORTATION

The only paved road in the district is U.S. Highway 191, which parallels the Gallatin River and bisects the district. Recent controversy has emerged concerning the proposed closure through Yellowstone National Park of Highway 191 to heavy truck traffic. The Big Sky Coalition for a Safer Highway 191 is a group of canyon residents who have promoted this closure.

The portion of Highway 191 that traverses Yellowstone Park is subject to Park Service jurisdiction and policy. Heavy truck traffic is normally prohibited through national parks; however,

Highway 191 has had a tradition of truck usage since its completion in the late 1920's. At this writing no final determination has been made, but park officials feel that the highway will probably have some restrictions on truck traffic.

The present highway traffic volume through the district is presented in the following table:

Average Daily Traffic Count*	1984	1985	1989
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Between mile post 11, entering National Park, and mile post 31, leaving National Park.....	1340	1715	2030
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Between mile post 31 and mile post 47, Big Sky spur road.....	1880	1940	2265
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\* Winter traffic volumes average from 40-60% of the average daily traffic count.

Only two public roads provide access from Highway 191. Buffalo Horn Creek Road travels through the 320 Ranch for about 1 1/2 miles and is open to the public. The Taylor Fork Road is public by proscription and runs west from Highway 191, becoming a primitive road beyond the Cache/Taylor Fork "Y".

## **CLIMATE**

Weather for the district is typical of the Rocky Mountains, exhibiting long winters and short cool summers. Because of the great relief in the district, the climate is variable. However, most developable areas are at elevations between 6300' and 7000' where precipitation averages 30" per year. At the higher elevations 2/3 of the precipitation comes in the form of snow (Farnes). The growing season is about 50 days in the most developable areas.

There are no reporting weather stations within the district; however, there is a station at West Yellowstone. Climate information is summarized in the following table.

Annual precipitation:	22.34"
Average January Temperature:	11.6 degrees Fahrenheit
Average July Temperature:	60.9 degrees Fahrenheit

Average annual precipitation:

January	2.39
February	1.67
March	1.74
April	1.51
May	2.17
June	2.62
July	1.38
August	1.63
September	1.54
October	1.42
November	1.90
December	2.37

There is an average of 150 inches of snow per year in the District.

The Gallatin Canyon Study, which was completed in the early 1970's, identified areas of temperature inversion along the Gallatin River. These areas are conducive to air stagnation which does not allow pollutants such as auto exhaust and wood smoke to escape. High volumes of these pollutants could concentrate near the ground and cause an air pollution problem.

## **LAND LIMITATIONS**

Under the leadership of Dr. John Montagne, a physical limitations study was carried out for the District in the summer of 1977. Select private properties were inspected for physical hazards including soil limitations, rockfall, faults, etc. In addition to the select properties maps, a composite map, available in the Gallatin County Planning Office, was compiled for the entire district which showed physical limitations and wildlife considerations.

## **Geology**

The SGZD is situated in Zone 3 for seismic activity, which is the highest level zone. Relatively destructive shaking may be initiated by any of the fault systems recently active in southwest Montana, and the adjacent areas of Idaho and Wyoming. Therefore, all building within the region should conform with engineering code allowing for Modified Mercalli Scale earthquake shocks of magnitude 7. This scale rates earthquake damage hazard with 1 having the least hazard and 12 having the highest hazard. It appears that no distinct seismic hazard exists within the SGZD other than its location in a relatively active seismic region.

The Taylor Fork basin is underlain by cretaceous age shales which in the Rocky Mountain region are susceptible to failure because of inherent weakness and hydrologic characteristics (C.

Montagne). Shales often trap ground water and cause saturation of the shale surface. This forms a weak interface with overlying material and makes for a lubricated sliding surface.

## **Soils**

A soils inventory for the Gallatin Canyon vicinity was completed in conjunction with the National Science Foundation study of the Big Sky ski resort in 1971. It identifies soil types and grades their inherent limitations with regard to numerous types of developments. In addition, in 1985, the Forest Service completed a soil survey of the area. That study is available in the Gallatin County Planning Office and should be consulted for detailed soils information.

Along the Gallatin River, excess slope limits development to the low floodplain adjacent the Gallatin River. Soils here are moderately deep with well drained gravelly and cobbly soils. Most of these soils offer only slight limitations to buildings without basements, but the seasonally high water table may cause problems for basements and septic systems.

## **Slope**

The mountains in the South Gallatin Zoning District set the tone and character of the District--it is an area of rugged terrain and great natural beauty. However, if not done carefully, development of hills and mountains can lead to increased runoff, sedimentation, and the loss of soil stability. Natural drainage patterns can be damaged and aesthetic resources can be destroyed.

Hillsides are fundamentally unstable--nature itself erodes them over time. Scattered or cluster development, which retains most of the vegetation and features such as hilltops and rock outcrops, and which follows the natural terrain, is the safest and most ecologically sound. Provisions are included in the zoning ordinance for development on sloping land.

Slope stability in Taylor Basin has been studied thoroughly by Cliff Montagne. The cretaceous shale bedrock is a source of slope stability problems in the basin. If development does not occur on slopes of 20% or greater, slope stability should not be a problem. For example, of twenty one slides sampled in cretaceous bedrock by C. Montagne all occurred on slopes greater than 37%. If building or road construction must take place on steep slopes, the following field observations should be made:

- 1) Excess water is associated with most landslides.
- 2) Colluvial slope mantles high in clay are particularly susceptible to mass movement when water saturated as they often are in spring.
- 3) Water indicator plant species such as spruce and aspen are often associated with landslides.

- 4) Road cuts were the cause of the majority of smaller landslides sampled by Cliff Montagne.

Indeed, slope is one of the most limiting factors to any development within the District, as most of the land in the District is mountainous.

### **Floodplain**

The South Gallatin Zoning District is located high in the Gallatin River drainage, and is therefore less subject to flooding. However, no official floodplain delineation has been done for the portion of the Gallatin River within the District. Any proposed subdivision that is within 2,000 feet of the river would be required to include a floodplain study.

### **POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

The population of the district is located in 5 different clusters. The estimated count is 40 permanent residents in the district, with some seasonal occupants of summer homes.

Guest ranching is the economic mainstay of the district. The total capacity of all the dude ranches in the Gallatin Canyon is approximately 225 to 300 guests, at any one time. The dude ranches employ 85 people and the ratio is one employee to every three guests (Kelsey).

The mountainous terrain, along with the large area of land in public ownership dictate limited growth potential in the district. The District will always remain important for its inherent forest uses such as fish and wildlife, grazing, timber production and recreation.

### **WATER RESOURCES**

Water, indeed, is one of the great resources of the SGZD. The Gallatin River is nationally famous for its Blue Ribbon fisheries and clean water. The fishery owes its notoriety to the abundant source of clean water which originates high in the Gallatin and Madison mountain ranges in the vicinity of the zoning district. The water quality of the Gallatin hangs in a critical balance with regard to erosion and sedimentation in its upper tributaries. The Blue Ribbons of Big Sky Study completed in 1979 stated the following:

The suspended sediment generated from the Taylor Fork watershed impacts the entire Gallatin River from the Taylor Fork confluence, down stream. The drainage integrates many natural and man-caused impacts into a diverse water quality problem...Any management activities in the drainage have the potential of producing a catastrophic impact on water quality...Basically all of the upper Gallatin drainage should be closely studied prior to any land management act. Some areas may not be able to tolerate any



disturbance and those that can, will require a higher degree of management in order to prohibit water quality impacts.

Cement Creek, a small tributary of Taylor Fork, exceeds federal standards for iron content and cannot propagate salmonoid fishes due to sedimentation as a result of natural erosional conditions.

Albino Lake, in the Taylor Fork drainage, is a 100 acre man-made lake. An earthen dam was constructed across Meadow Creek in 1934-35 by the Civilian Conservation Corps to create a fishery and a nesting area for waterfowl. Fishing pressure on the lake is moderate.

The residents of the district obtain most of their water from developed springs. The Cinnamon Creek Water Co. provides water for the residents of that area and the Cinnamon Lodge. Water is diverted from Section 28, R4E, T8S, on Forest Service land and is gravity fed to users. The Covered Wagon Ranch takes water directly from Taylor Fork, where it is passed through a sand filter and chlorinated. The Black Butte Ranch has a well.

Irrigation ditch systems exist on the Nine Quarter Circle, Elkhorn and 320 Ranches. These irrigation systems date back to homestead times in the 1890's, are still in use, and may be used in the future.

## **WILDLIFE**

The South Gallatin Zoning District encompasses year round range for some of North America's premier wildlife species. The area provides year round range for elk, moose, mule deer, whitetail deer, mountain lions, black bear, and grizzly bear. The Taylor Fork drainage has the highest concentration of moose in the Gallatin Canyon. Grizzly bear use is well documented throughout the District, and the District is included in the area studied by the Interagency Grizzly Management Team. The district also

encompasses a large part of the winter range and calving areas for one of our national treasures, the Gallatin elk herd.

The significance the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks attributes to the Gallatin elk herd is best described in a 1977 memo written by Arnie Foss (former Game Manager for Southwestern Montana) to then Director Wambach. The memo stated:

The management of the Gallatin elk herd has been one of the primary concerns of the Montana Fish and Game Department for the past 50 years. More time, effort and money has been devoted to this elk herd than to any other in the state. Intensive biological studies of this migratory elk herd began in 1919 and have continued to the present.

Management of the Gallatin elk herd has been the center of many controversies, beginning as early as 1900. Controversies centered around early game law enforcement attempts, over-harvest, poaching, livestock grazing, feeding, reductions within Yellowstone National Park, and the carrying capacity of the winter range. The FWP publication "People and the Gallatin Elk Herd" provides a very interesting and informative account of these controversies and should be consulted for additional information.

Throughout the late 1960's and 1970's, logging was the foremost issue facing the Gallatin elk herd. In the mid-1970's development at the Big Sky resort began to impact the elk herd. The resort has proven to be a catalyst in spawning development in the upper canyon.

In 1945, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks purchased the Porcupine Wildlife Management Area (WMA), which was the first wildlife management area purchased in Southwestern Montana. In 1954, the FWP acquired the Bear Creek WMA located along the west face of the Madison Range, just northwest of the Taylor Fork drainage. Both of these areas provide important winter range for the Gallatin elk herd.

There are four major winter elk concentration areas for the Gallatin elk herd: the Porcupine drainage, the Taylor Fork drainage, Teepee/Daily drainages, and the Bear Creek drainage located along the west face of the Madison Range. The Porcupine drainage currently has the highest concentration of wintering elk in the Canyon, about 600. Much of the winter range in the Porcupine drainage is in checkerboard ownership by Big Sky Lumber and the Forest Service.

The Taylor Fork drainage not only provides important winter range but also is one of the highest density elk calving areas in the Canyon and is part of an important migratory route. In recent years approximately 1800 elk migrate during December from Yellowstone National Park up the Taylor Fork drainage, up the Cache Creek drainage and over the Madison/Gallatin Divide to winter on the Bear Creek WMA.

## **Winter Habitat**

As was described in Lovaas' publication, carrying capacity estimates in the Canyon have been a major focus of controversy. Estimates of potential carrying capacity in the early 1900s were in the neighborhood of 5,000+ wintering elk. However, as more information was gathered those estimates were significantly reduced to the current management goal of around 1,400 to 1,600 wintering elk. This does not include the approximately 800 elk from the Gallatin herd which migrate to the Madison Face to winter.

The foundation of the current population management goal is based on at least maintaining the productivity of the soil and vegetative resources and over the long term allowing for an improvement in condition of these basic resources.

The Upper Gallatin Canyon is unique in that it is a dead end wintering area. Unlike the Gallatin Valley, Madison Valley or Yellowstone Valley, once winter sets in, elk in the Canyon do not have the option of moving out into a broad open valley. They are essentially snow bound on a wintering area which stretches from Specimen Creek inside Yellowstone National Park to the Big Sky Resort area. There is no avenue of escape from the Canyon during winters of heavy snowfall.

Because of concerns with damage to willow and aspen stands and to minimize winter starvation losses the herd is managed at a level in concert with winter range availability during average to more severe winters.

Privately owned sections in the South Gallatin Planning District which are MOST critical to maintaining the Gallatin elk herd: Sections 33 and 35, T8S, R3E and Sections 1 and 3, T9S, R3E. Winter range is shown on the Wildlife Winter Range Map.

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks recommends that the above private sections should have no year round occupied dwellings. If lands shown on the map change from public to private ownership, they should be evaluated for restrictions on year round use. Of all the sections, these represent areas where even low level development would have detrimental impacts on the Gallatin elk herd. These sections provide critical winter range, a migration corridor and are very important calving grounds for elk.

Because of the natural topographic features of the terrain, the migratory path of those elk which travel over the Madison/Gallatin Divide in late November and December to reach the Bear Creek winter range on the Madison Face is quite narrow. In short, elk, over thousands of years have chosen this as the route to their winter range because of these features. If significant development occurred along this path, it would have serious impacts on the wildlife population.

Because of the relatively high density of calving that takes place in the Taylor Fork drainage it has a concentration of foraging grizzly bears in the spring. The entire zoning district is considered occupied grizzly bear habitat.

As was stated earlier, the Taylor Fork drainage also has the highest year-round density of moose in the upper Gallatin.

The zoning ordinance regulations reflect the critical nature of the above four sections. Only very limited uses are allowed as a matter of right--timber activities, farming, grazing, and signs.

Any other uses require consideration through the conditional use permit process. Through the conditional use permit procedure, the following guidelines will be adhered to:

1. Critical times to prohibit elk and human interaction, such as migration and calving times.
2. Summer use will be the least detrimental, as wildlife have maximum flexibility at that time.

### **Population Management**

Because the majority of this population spends the summer and fall in Yellowstone National Park it has long been recognized by wildlife managers across the State that population control could not take place during the general big game season. The management of the Gallatin elk herd generally takes place during a late season elk hunt. These hunts are first and foremost population regulation hunts.

The current season structure starts in January and will normally run one month. However, it may in some years be extended into February.

To reiterate, the importance of the late hunts is to maintain the population at a level which is commensurate with winter range capabilities.

## **Wildlife Summary**

The year round requirements of the Gallatin elk herd encompass most elevation and vegetation types found in the Canyon. Their specific movement patterns and habitat requirements have been more extensively documented over a longer period of time than any other elk herd in Montana and quite possibly North America.

Although most of the above deals specifically with elk, other species in the District are of equal importance. However, based on their broad habitat requirements, maintaining a healthy, high quality Gallatin elk herd and the associated habitat requirements, will provide quality habitat for most of the other wildlife species which require relatively open un-subdivided spaces, specifically moose, black bears, grizzly bears, wolverines and mountain lions. Feeding of big game animals is discouraged because of the increase in disease and potential disease transmission to other wildlife, domestic livestock and humans. Since the South Gallatin Zoning District is occupied grizzly habitat and artificial feeding concentrates winter mortality, grizzly bear/human conflicts are also increased by feeding of big game animals.

## **VEGETATIVE COVER**

Well defined vegetation zones in the district correlate principally to elevation. Bugbee wrote the following about the vegetation in the region of the South Gallatin Zoning District:

The uppermost zone in elevation is the alpine zone, characterized by alpine tundra and the absence of trees. Below the alpine is the subalpine zone, dominated in most areas by Engleman spruce and subalpine fir. The next lower zone is the montane zone, characterized by dominance of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine. In the upper part of the montane zone and lower subalpine zone, the occurrence of fires favors the development of seral aspen and/or lodge pole pine forest. Below the montane zone is the foothill zone, a dry area of rocky slopes, dominated by shrubs and grasses with areas of open woodlands and pockets of forests in more moist areas and on north slopes. In drier areas of the region, high altitude grasslands may be bordered directly by the mid to upper montane zone with forests absent of ponderosa pine and dominated by Douglas-fir and lodge pole pine. (Bailey,1978).

Several observations concerning vegetation are most important within the District:

- 1) Slope stability is a problem in Taylor Fork and vegetation removal from critical slopes could cause slope failure.
- 2) Fire management is critical due to the region's remoteness and wildfire caused by lightning strikes. Property owners should be aware that there is no organized fire protection district in the South Gallatin Zoning District. The Forest Service provides only wildland fire protection. It is advised that roofing be fire resistant and that access and adequate turnaround for fire fighting equipment be provided.

3) Abundant wildlife in the area depend on vegetation for forage and cover.

### **RECREATIONAL USE**

The residents of the District have relied on recreation since the early 1900's. Virtually all of the full time residents are associated with guest ranching. The ranches have made use of the magnificent scenery, fishing and hunting, and Yellowstone National Park in operating these facilities. The "Blue Ribbon" status of the Gallatin River is derived from its excellent fishery and is a designation accorded only eight stream segments in the state.

Snowmobiling is a popular winter motorized recreation activity in the District. The Big Sky Snowmobile Trail traverses the entire Gallatin Canyon and ends in West Yellowstone. The Forest Service has counted four thousand snowmobiles using this trail during a winter.

The high country of the Madison and Gallatin Ranges is a popular destination for horsepacking and backpacking trips.

### **LAND USE PLAN**

The land use map and plan, together, are a statement of intent for the development and preservation of land within the District. The land use map must be used in conjunction with this plan. The map shows graphically what the community will be like in the future. The goals and objectives state what the values of the community are. Future development proposals will be evaluated for conformance with both the plan and land use map. Future amendments to the plan will be evaluated for conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies found in the plan.

The land use map is forward looking and projects land uses for the next 10-15 years. It is based on identified community values, existing services and facilities, and projected needs.

The land use map classifies all lands in the District into the six general or broad categories explained below. Land uses are

designated in a general manner; lines do not necessarily follow property boundaries and are flexible.

It should be noted that state statute prohibits the regulation of lands used for grazing, horticulture, agriculture, or for the growing of timber.

#### LAND USE CATEGORIES

Commercial	Permits facilities for the buying and selling of goods and services. A total of two restaurants is permitted in the Zoning District. One neighborhood commercial establishment that provides services for District residents is also allowed.
Residential	Land designated for dwelling units and accessory structures.
Stream Corridors	Vegetative and wildlife areas adjacent to perennial and intermittent streams. Stream corridors are intended for preservation as open space.
Recreation and Forestry	Lands designated for facilities which provide guest accommodations and either on site or off site recreational activities. It is intended that these areas remain very low density to protect the natural scenic and environmental qualities of the district.
Public	Property in ownership by governmental agencies generally the United States Forest Service or State of Montana.
Wildlife	Areas identified as most critical to maintaining the Gallatin elk herd and other species such as grizzly bear and moose. Special development restrictions apply to these lands that are in private ownership.

#### PENDING LAND EXCHANGE

At the time this plan was formulated, a land exchange and purchase was pending between the United States Forest Service and Dave Brask. Within the District, the Forest Service proposed acquiring Sections 1 and 35, Township Nine South, Range Three East, from Mr. Brask. In exchange, Mr. Brask would receive

additional land in Sections 27 and 34, Township Eight South, Range Four East.

If the land exchange is successful, the South Gallatin Advisory Committee recommends that all lands acquired by the Forest

Service be zoned Public Lands. In addition, the Committee recommends that if Sections 27 and 34 are changed from public ownership to private ownership, the appropriate zoning would be Canyon Residential west of Highway 191 and the appropriate zoning east of Highway 191 would be Canyon Commercial.

### **SUMMARY**

In general, the SGZD is unique for its wild character, its close proximity to Yellowstone National Park and National Forest Wilderness, and its abundant wildlife. A guest ranching economy that developed early in this century continues to be the basis of the economy. In order to protect the existing qualities of the district, the primary environmental concerns identified in this report include:

- 1) Preservation of water quality, which could be affected by septic disposal, construction, and logging.
- 2) Unstable soils, which could be the cause of landslides due to surface disturbance.
- 3) Loss of wildlife habitat, primarily winter range.
- 4) Loss of wild character due to development.

The existing attractiveness of the district can be maintained by following the guidelines in this plan and the terms of the zoning ordinance.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The beauty of the natural features of the District is highly valued by both residents and visitors. The intent of this Plan is to maintain and enhance the lifestyle and recreational values of the District. The foremost goal of this Plan is to protect and preserve the existing ecosystem.

#### **General Goals**

1. Prepare suitable land use alternatives for the environmental enhancement of the SGZD.
2. Maintain a cooperative planning program with local, state, and federal agencies that have jurisdiction in the District.

Environment



Encourage the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the natural environment and scenic values of the South Gallatin Canyon.

Encourage coordination of both public and private forest management practices and recommend logging guidelines designed to protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of the Canyon.

Preserve stream and river channels and riparian vegetation from unnecessary alteration and disturbance.

Enhance high water quality standards for the District's major streams.

Through the development review process, reiterate the importance of State air quality guidelines and encourage development to maintain a high standard for air quality.

Develop and apply adequate erosion control guidelines to all development that comes under the zoning district's jurisdiction.

Conserve and enhance the fish and wildlife habitat.

Study and develop a program for solid waste and garbage collection and disposal for business, residential and recreation uses.

Provide for sewage disposal and treatment standards designed to protect the water quality of streams and rivers in the SGZD.

Encourage development of fire protection services for the South Gallatin Canyon area, particularly where structure concentrations warrant.

Formulate densities based on resource protection.

Protect ridgelines, skylines, and viewshed.

Identify and protect significant views.

### Community Design

Keep all future development in character with the special natural environment of the South Gallatin District.

Develop land uses compatible with existing land uses.

Encourage site planning and building and landscape design in keeping with the natural character of the District.

Develop standards for signing and display advertising to establish certain size, color, and design limitations to blend with the natural environment.

Visually screen development from major circulation routes.

Encourage public property managers to comply with the District's community design goals and objectives.

### Land Use Activities

Protect existing residential and tourist/recreation developments in the district and provide for additional development of these uses on a limited basis that will preserve the character of the area. Provide for limited commercial activities of the type frequently required by zoning district residents.

Develop guidelines to enhance the relationships between such development and the natural environment.

Limit commercial development to concentrated areas necessary to the support of existing recreation activities.

Insure commercial areas are easily accessible from primary circulation routes and prohibit manufacturing and businesses traditionally incompatible with present uses in the Canyon.

Maintain and enhance the lifestyle and recreational values of the district, especially those associated with guest ranches, the principal economic activity of the area.

Control the development of recreational land uses in the Canyon and limit that development to activities which retain the area's natural character.

### Circulation

Recommend guidelines for development activities along Highway 191 and adjacent off-highway use.

Maintain transportation and circulation system, using existing roads, that has a minimal impact on the present environment.

Encourage the elimination of nonessential truck traffic from U.S. 191.

Adopt and put into practice road and access design standards intended to improve the safety, usability, and visual enjoyment of all roads within the District.

Limit direct highway access to adjoining properties.

Restrict construction work on Highway 191 to normal maintenance and minor improvements including scenic turnouts, protected turning movements, pedestrian crossings, signed animal crossings, work necessary to meet highway safety standards, and traffic control signing, where needed.

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